

## Devotional and Selections

### LIVING AND DYING TO JESUS.

Jesus, I live to Thee  
The loveliest and best;  
My life in Thee, Thy life in me,  
In Thy blest love I rest.

Jesus, I die to Thee  
Whenever death shall come;  
To die in Thee is life to me,  
In my eternal home.

Whether to live or die,  
I know not which is best;  
To live in Thee is bliss to me,  
To die is endless rest.

Living or dying, Lord,  
I ask but to be Thine;  
My life in Thee, Thy life in me,  
Makes heaven forever mine.

This hymn was sung by the students of Mercersburg Academy, Pennsylvania, while the remains of their instructor, Samuel M. Brereton, lay in the academy chapel, at the memorial service, February 13, 1908.

### THE HARP OF THE HEART.

By the Late Theodore L. Cuyler.

Grand old Paul was evidently a musician. He not only joined Silas in a rousing duet at midnight that woke up all the prisoners, but he emphasizes the power of sacred song in two of his epistles. He exhorts the brethren at Colosse to stir each other up with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Praise was an important element in the worship of those primitive Christians; they marched to music. The best days of Christ's church have always been its singing days; Luther's hymns aroused Germany more than Luther's sermons, and John Wesley never would have built up Methodism so rapidly if its walls had not ascended under the inspiration of his brother Charles' seraphic hymns.

There is no praise like a heart-song. Wherefore the apostle tells the Ephesians just what he had told the Colossians, that they must not merely sing, but "make melody in their hearts to the Lord." This signifies the music of the soul; and the original word means to play on a stringed instrument. And the most wonderful of all instruments is the harp of the human heart. What a multitude of chorals it contains! How many strings can be struck there! What marvelous melodies can be invoked! Perhaps a large part of that celestial music that John describes in his account of heaven was in the harmony of innumerable glorified souls rejoicing before the throne of God.

Conversion signifies a new hand touching the heart-strings. Sin breeds endless discords; rebellious thoughts, murmurings, hatreds, often breaking into blasphemies against a loving Father. The regenerated heart attuned by the Holy Spirit vibrates to a new music. "He hath put a new song in my mouth" really signifies a change of heart. The spirit of ingratitude and opposition to God has been taken away, and the soul has been brought into unison with him. The real essence of holiness is to agree with God in all things. There was a new music in the once blood-thirsty and

bigoted soul of Saul of Tarsus when it was said of him, "Behold, he prayeth." Christ's hand is on the heart strings now, and they are pitched to a new melody.

When Napoleon found that his wearied troops were ready to give out during their toilsome climb over the Alps, he sent word to the bandmaster to "change the tune," and a lively strain from the bugles put new life into weary feet. The grace of Jesus Christ put into the heart so changes enmity into love that life becomes a walking with Christ, and then the hardest up-hill climb becomes a fresh step toward heaven.

A devout heart has a very large repertoire of music. At one time it is a burst of gratitude: "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits!" At another time, it is a low, tender key of penitence; but no strain is more audible to the divine ear than that which proceeds from the broken and contrite heart. Seasons of sharp trial call forth some strains to which bright and prosperous hours are strangers. In the Black Forest of Germany an old baron built a castle with two lofty towers. From one tower to the other he stretched several wires, which in calm weather were motionless and silent. When the wind began to blow the wires began to play like an Aeolian harp in a window. As the wind rose into boisterous gale, the old baron sat in his castle and heard his mighty hurricane harp playing grandly above the battlements! So while the weather is calm and the skies are clear, a great many of the emotions of a Christian's heart are silent. As soon as the winds of adversity smite the chord, the heart begins to play; and often when God sends a hurricane of terrible trials, you will hear strains of submission and faith, and even sublime confidence and holy exultation which could never have been heard in the calm hours of sunny prosperity. Oh, brethren, let the rough winds smite us if they only make the spices flow; let us not shrink from the deepest trials if at midnight we can, like Paul and Silas, sing praises to our God.

It is sin that makes the wretched discords. Anger, malice and uncharitableness kill the spirit of devotion; and the foolish contemptible worries that we too often indulge in, put us shockingly out of tune. Our hearts, like pianos, often require retuning, in order to bring us into submission to God and into a holy harmony with him. When a piano or melodeon is in right condition, we always feel sure that its keys will discourse eloquent music. So out of an obedient, Christ-loving heart proceed pure thoughts, and generous sympathies and holy desires and noble deeds. It is out of the abundance of such a heart that the mouth speaketh.

It is our reproach that we do not oftener touch that chord in the hearts of the sinful, the hardened, and the profligate which may respond to every syllable of kindness. It was the kind word of Joel Stratton, the humble shoemaker of Worcester, and a cordial hand on the shoulder, that first brought the drunken John B. Gough into the temperance meeting and pioneered the reformation of the most eloquent advocate of total abstinence that a century has heard. In the hardest heart is some silent chord that will vibrate to the touch of love. Happy the Christian who knows how to touch the harp-strings that had only emitted complainings or curses, to evoke praises to our God!

This world is only a rehearsal for eternity. Some